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August 18, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, and Ranking Member Fleischman:

I write the House Committee on Appropriations to consider adding funding to the Fiscal Year 2022 Homeland Security Appropriations bill to address the shortfall in customs and user fees revenue caused by continued travel restrictions put in place due to COVID-19 pandemic. The inability to account for this lost revenue threatens to disrupt the resumption of normal cross border travel and commerce along the northern border.

On August 9th, the Government of Canada reopened their land border to all fully vaccinated Americans for discretionary travel. While this was a welcome development which the United States failed to reciprocate, this action has resulted in an increase in cross border travel and traffic from returning Americans along our northern land ports of entry.

When the United States does fully reopen our land border with Canada, it is critical this happens without interruption or unnecessary delay. For instance, Western New York is home to four land ports of entry with Canada and is one of the busiest border crossings in North America. There are serious concerns in my community and among U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel that CBP lacks the necessary resources needed to undertake such a reopening. Under normal circumstances, CBP operations are funded in-part by customs and user fee revenues. The pandemic and associated border closures with Canada have greatly reduced this important revenue stream, undermining an orderly reopening.

As you know, CBP is not only responsible for protecting our land ports of entry, but also facilitating lawful commerce and travel between the United States and Canada. In addition to these

duties, CBP Officers are tasked with intercepting smuggled goods and people coming into the United States as well as ensuring foreign goods comply with our trade and agricultural laws. Their presence in border communities like mine is positive for the local economy and critical to our national security and national supply chains.

For FY21, appropriators recognized the challenge the pandemic and border closures posed to user and custom fee revenues and responded with an \$840 million emergency appropriation to maintain necessary staffing levels at land ports of entry. The FY22 Homeland Security Appropriations bill must address these ongoing revenue shortfalls. Until US-Canada border operations normalize, I expect these revenue shortfalls to persist. In addition, this bill is an opportunity to ensure land ports of entry have adequate staffing and robust funding for border infrastructure which will make international travel and commerce more efficient and more secure. I wholly support a funding bill which makes these necessary and forward-thinking investments.

Thank you for your attention on this matter. We must ensure that CBP maintains the appropriate operational capacity to move goods and people to and from Canada, one of our nation's most important trading partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "B" and a trailing flourish at the end.

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Richard Neal, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Trade